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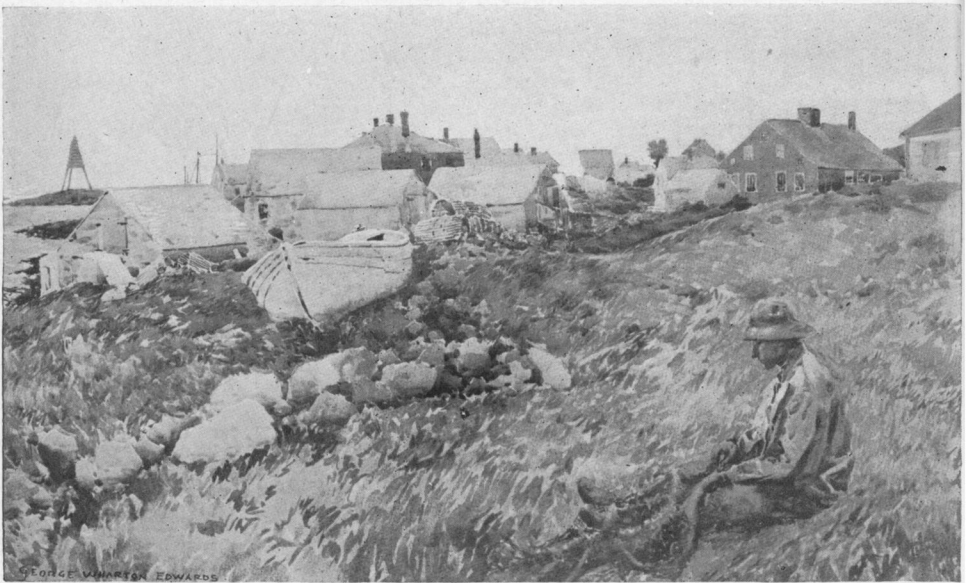
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THE VILLAGE OF MONHEGAN

GEORGE WHARTON EDWARDS

MONHEGAN ISLAND

A FAVORITE RESORT OF THE PAINTERS OF THE SEA

BY JAMES B. CARRINGTON

MONHEGAN, though but twelve miles or a little more from the coast of Maine, has for the winter of the year almost the remoteness and separation from the great world at large of a thousand miles of blue water. To many, I dare say, even the location of this great rocky island is unknown. My notion of it, gathered from vague recollections of an old story of a shipwreck there, was of a place aloof, a wild, rocky, nearly inaccessible wilderness, the home of a few hardy fishermen and broods of wandering seabirds. On the map it shows but a tiny spot of color.

Among the few hundred regular dwellers on the island may be found some who have never been to the main land. Their daily round of life has been bounded by the sparkle of the waters, the beating of the surf on the rocks, and the darkest nights starred by the great blinking eye of the powerful lighthouse that stands sentinel on the shoulder of the highest hill.

The old way to Monhegan was one that

used to offer especial joy to the real lover of the sea. Starting from the beautiful harbor of Boothbay the smart and staunch sailing packet, schooner-rigged, once a member of Cape Cod's famous fishing fleet, made her way on the open sea to the island. Rain or shine, blow high—blow low—rare indeed was the weather that could keep her hardy skipper in port. She carried freight and Uncle Sam's mail all the year round and a few passengers, chiefly during the summer months, and was the only link that bound the island to the distant shore and brought to the fishermen news of what was happening in the world beyond.

There was at times a delightful uncertainty about her goings and comings that lent an element of speculative interest to the journey. It was not an uncommon experience to have the wind drop out with the going down of the sun and the boat spend the large part of the night drifting about on the oily seas. With a fair wind it was but a few hours' travel and with

all sails set gave one a taste of the exhilarating and inspiring seamanship associated with the famed racers of Gloucester and Provincetown, and put a passenger's own seaworthiness to a pretty severe test. The entire coast inland from Monhegan is broken up into a maze of narrow channels, rocky islands, bold headlands, and requires vigilance in navigation as well as familiarity with local waters. Nowadays the *May Archer*, steam-packet, has

The shores of the small harbor are bordered with weather-stained dilapidated fish houses, some of them festooned with brown nets drying in the sun. All about are evidences of the only occupation possible on the island, the pursuit of the festive lobster and fish. On the hillside lies the settlement, houses set at haphazard along the winding stony roads, most of them trim and neat in white paint and green blinds.



ICEBOUND LEDGES—MONHEGAN ISLAND

WILLIAM RITSCHEL

replaced sail and by the same token has taken from old times something of the glamour and romance that used to be.

On a clear day Monhegan looms up far ahead, trembling, a blue shadow, in the sunlight. Within hailing distance you get a fine view of the rocky heights of Manana—a smaller sister isle separated from Monhegan by a pretty little bay—and the outlying ledges of the southern end of Monhegan itself. On the high shoulder of Manana is a queer-looking big steam horn whose hoarse bass note bleats out at regular intervals in foggy weather to warn mariners from approach.

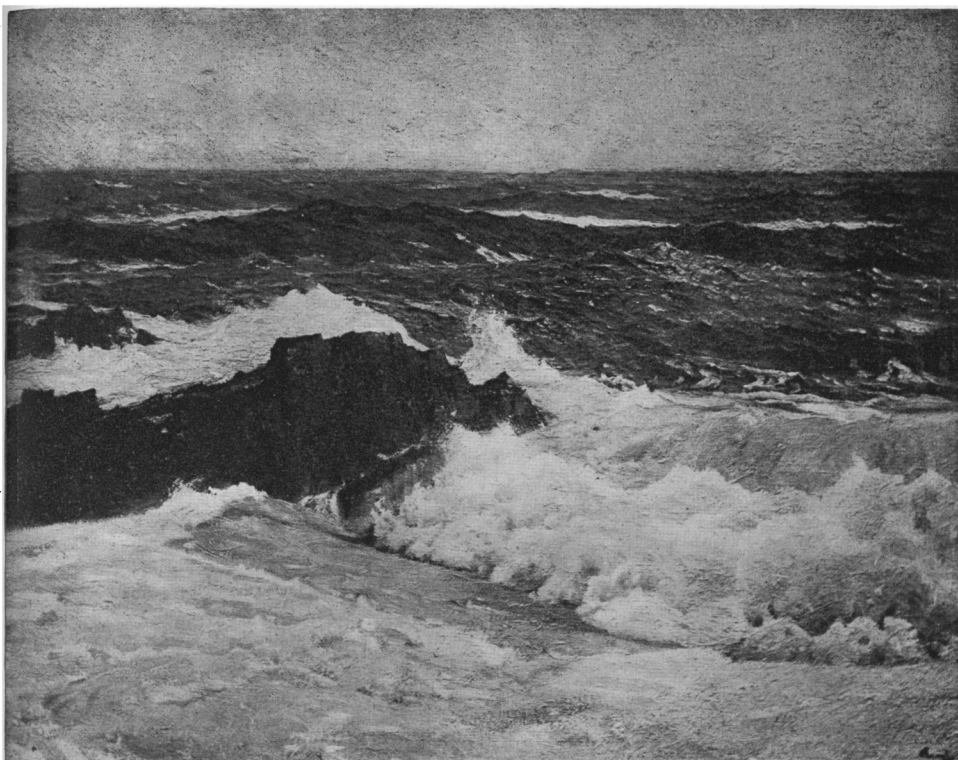
The spiles of the picturesque little wharf where the boats land are covered with barnacles and winkles, and the rocks beneath are festooned and cushioned with a most wonderful growth of seaweed. Floating here and there in the water are a number of kelp with daintily fluted edges, the texture of which resembles nothing so much as a fine quality of oiled silk. The stems of some of these lying on the surface suggest the wriggling motion of a sea serpent. These stems are hollow, and by the natives may be put to curious practical uses in an emergency. An ingenious skipper of a small



THE ROCKDWELLERS

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F. K. M. REHN



OFF THE MONHEGAN COAST

F. J. WAUGH

boat propelled by a gasoline "kicker" was said to have used one of these as a feed-pipe for his engine!

Life at Monhegan for the natives is mostly fishing. They have only to go off shore a little way in their staunch motor-dories to capture the supply of lobsters, cod, haddock, and hake. All are off for the catch in the dim hours before dawn, when the sea to the uninitiated is oppressive in its vast loneliness.

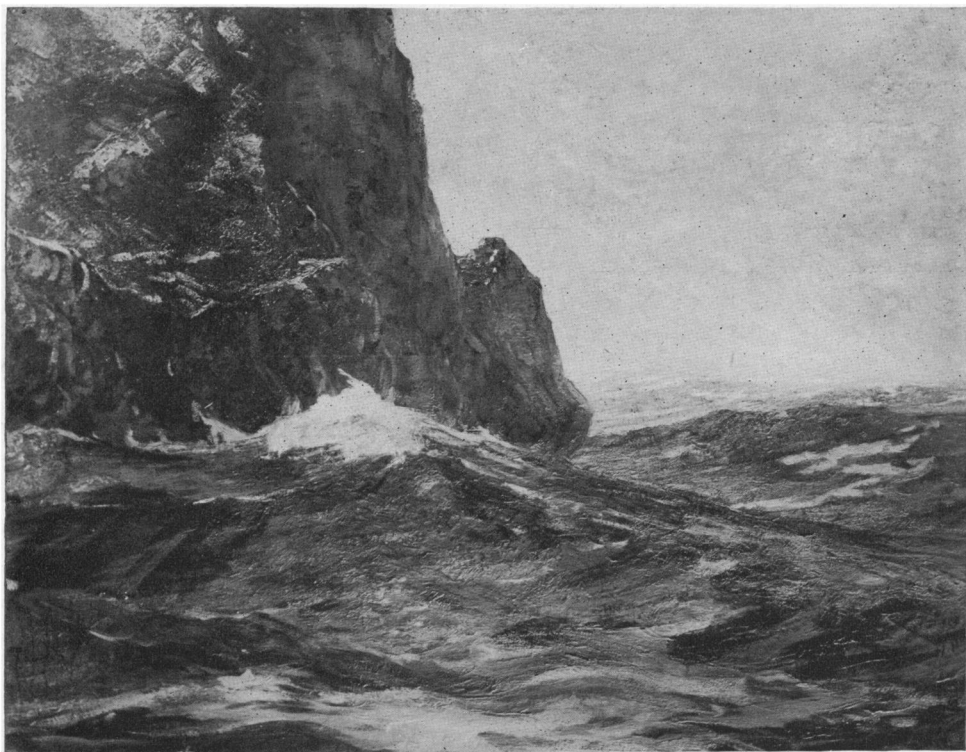
From the number of lobster traps on the shore in all stages of picturesque confusion you get the impression that here must be the land of plenty. The lobster business has been overdone, however, all along the Maine coast, and the wise fishers of Monhegan have often declared a closed season for the summer. When one considers that some 75,000 lobsters turned from the color of the star-board light to that of the port light in one season, the wonder is that there are any left to navigate the waters at all.

The northern and eastern shores of

Monhegan rise in great headlands as high as 150 feet, with no footing at their base, going down without a break into the deep water that laps their feet. Woe to the ship that runs ashore here. Near the southern end is the huge, outlying mass of Gull Rock, seamed by the beating of the seas, and beyond that the famous Washer-woman and other ledges.

After a storm you realize the full power and cruelty of the sea and the majesty of the resistance offered to its ravages by these iron shores. The waves hurl themselves with terrific force against the walls, the spray flying even over the highest points. It is an impressive and never-to-be-forgotten experience to listen to the impact of the waters and think of their power. The noise is like the booming of a great battery. The scars of the battle are there in the deep seams and fissures and the occasional great hollow caves.

On Monhegan, if anywhere, you can feel in the fullest measure the beauty, glamour and the loneliness of the ocean;



A MONHEGAN HEADLAND

THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART

PAUL DOUGHERTY

its changing moods of peace and war; its wonderful lights and shadows; its exuberant and sparkling joy; and in a day of fog, its profound and fathomless melancholy and mystery.

High up near the center of the island is the lighthouse whose great white eye gleams out over the surrounding waters at night. Just below it on the line of a narrow footpath that leads in a winding way to the shore is the peaceful little graveyard, its size and silent inhabitants proportioned to the number of people of the island. In here one may learn of some of the tragedies that attend the lives of those who live at the mercy of the sea.

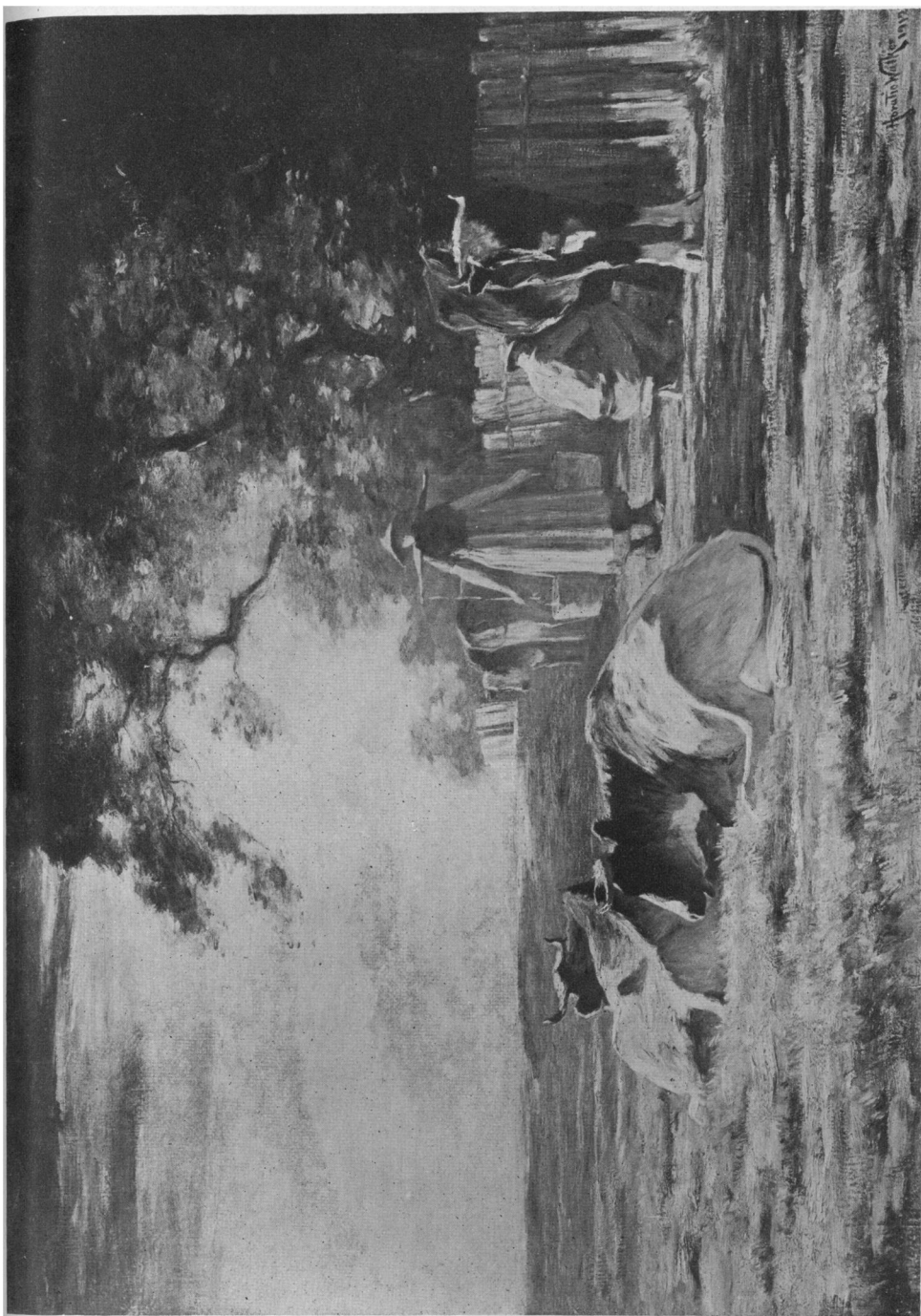
There is a pervading atmosphere of comfortable living about the little homes, and a cheerful friendliness of manner about the people of Monhegan.

Much of the land is covered with a thick growth of stunted fir trees, while the by-paths are bordered with wild rose bushes, juniper and the low-growing blue berries.

The visitor here is impressed with a

sense of being set apart from the world and its keen struggle, its selfishness and greed appear away off there in the hazy distance. Here men seem to live their lives as they will, the fight is mainly with the elements. It is a very far cry from the city's turmoil, and to a fresh eye and mind tired with the stir of the crowd, offers a brief session of engaging contrast and a loosening of taut nerves.

In very few places is there a stronger appeal made to the sense of the picturesque. It is an ideal hunting ground for the man or woman who is looking for things to paint. George Wharton Edwards has lived and painted here, and Frederick Waugh, Paul Dougherty, Bicknell, Ritschel and many others, have found motives on these rocky shores for some of their finest marines. The rocks, the sea, the changing skies, the fish houses and boats, offer a constant succession of varied subjects, while the fisher folk, with their souwesters and great boots, afford an always pleasant and genial human interest.



MILKING—EVENING

COURTESY OF N. E. MONTROSS

RECENTLY PURCHASED BY THE CITY ART MUSEUM, ST. LOUIS

HORATIO WALKER